



November 2014

### Are you ready for winter?



The Council has a crucial part to play in helping the city deal with whatever the weather has in store for us over the coming months and we have recently launched two campaigns to help residents get ready.

Our [Ready for Winter](#) campaign provides contact and other useful information to residents across the city, ensuring everyone can get the help and services they need. The council website's [winter weather pages](#) include details of priority road, cycle path and pavement gritting routes, plus an interactive map displaying the location of grit bins across the city.

Also, in recognition of the ever-increasing cost of energy, we've begun a [Warm Your Home](#) campaign to help people heat their homes as effectively and cheaply as possible.

As ever, but particularly at this time of year, please do take the time to look out for elderly neighbours and friends to make sure that they are safe and well.

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### Keeping to our pledges

It's fair to say that politicians often make ambitious promises when canvassing for votes but how often do they voluntarily put their commitments up for public examination?

On taking office in May 2012, we set out 53 specific [pledges](#) that we aimed to deliver by 2017. These are based on a number of high level commitments, which include reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation, and maintaining and improving the quality of life in Edinburgh.

I am pleased to report that, thanks to recent developments such as the passing of a Private Bill allowing the new Portobello High School to be built on Portobello Park, we have now met 12 of the pledges with all but one of the remainder on track to be completed within our five year term.

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### Cooperative Capital

One of our key pledges was to put the public back at the centre of decision-making. We want communities to be much more involved in planning, managing and delivering services; to give local people a greater sense of choice and control over the public services they use.

We have made some significant strides towards becoming a '[Cooperative Capital](#)' in the past two years, establishing the city's first After Schools Club Co-op Charter and a Student Housing Co-op, while providing development support for the Craigmillar Eco-Housing project. Meanwhile, a number of energy co-ops, including the Edinburgh Community Solar Co-op and Castle Rock Edinvar's 'Our Power' initiative are also progressing well and will soon be delivering affordable and renewable energy to tenants.

Having become the first Scottish local authority to join the [Co-operative Councils Innovation Network](#) last year, I was delighted to accept the role of Chair recently – recognition of just how far we've come in such a short space of time.

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### Still time to have your say

We're now around half way through our budget consultation and the response so far has been fantastic. Well over a thousand of you have completed our [budget planner](#) online, with a further 200 submitting comments by post or email.

If you haven't already done so, please take the time to have your say. The consultation period runs all the way through until **Friday 19<sup>th</sup> December**, and we *will* consider all feedback prior to setting the final 2015/16 Budget in February.

The planner also features on our newly established [Consultation Hub](#), which helps you to find and participate in consultations of interest to you. I would recommend subscribing to the automated email alerts for new consultations as and when they come online.

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### Pride in our People

I recently attended the Council's 'Pride in our People' Staff Awards ceremony in the Assembly Rooms and, once again, I was reminded of the outstanding quality and commitment of the staff who work for this city.

The Awards celebrate those who go that extra mile: the people who help us make Edinburgh such a great place to live, work and visit; recognising those on the frontline, the innovators, the leaders and the rising stars – the teams and individuals who've found a way to improve value and deliver our services better.

I want to repeat the thanks I gave on the night, not just to the winners and shortlisted entrants but also to staff right across the Council, who continue to play a marvelous role in making sure that everything works efficiently and effectively right across the Capital.

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